

CIRM Adds Five New Hires, including VP Scientific Programs and a Decorated Veteran, to Build Out Its World Class Team

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Oakland, CA – CIRM is welcoming back two former Science Officers as it adds to its world class team in the wake of the voter approval of Proposition 14, which gave the Stem Cell Agency \$5.5 billion in renewed funding.

Rosa Canet-Aviles, PhD., has been named as the new **Vice President Scientific Programs**. Rosa is a familiar face at the agency, serving as a Science Officer with CIRM from 2008 to 2014. During that time she helped oversee the development of our Translational program, managed a broad portfolio of projects and organized workshops on Parkinson's and autism.

After leaving CIRM she joined the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH) where she served as the Director of Neuroscience Research Partnerships. In that role she led the successful development and management of 5 new large partnerships including the Biomarkers Consortium Neuroscience Steering Committee, the Accelerating Medicines Partnership (AMP) for Alzheimer's disease 1.0 and 2.0, AMP Parkinson's disease and AMP Schizophrenia.

Rosa has more than 15 years of experience working in industry, academia and government and her experience in developing and managing neuroscience programs will be invaluable as CIRM looks to invest some \$1.5 billion in neuroscience under Proposition 14.

"I am very excited to be back," says Rosa. "It is a dream come true being able to translate all the skills, learning and networks gathered over the past 7 years towards the development and implementation of CIRM's new phase and accelerate stem cell therapies for patients in need."

"We are thrilled to announce the timely return of Rosa to CIRM as we build our new strategic plan under Prop 14," says Dr. Maria T. Millan, CIRM's President & CEO. "Rosa has demonstrated time and again the unique ability to bring together often seemingly disparate stakeholders to successfully drive toward a common goal of advancing the science on behalf of patients with diseases of the brain and neuropsychiatric disorders. At CIRM, she assembled key international leaders who went on to form an international Parkinson's Disease consortium. At the Foundation for NIH (FNIH), she directed the development of five prominent public-private partnerships. A neuroscientist by training, she is held in high regard and has been called a "quick study" in her ability to lead in new areas such as in genomics and data science, key components of her role at FNIH and at Eisai's Center for Genetics Guided Dementia Discovery."

In addition, CIRM is pleased to announce the following new team members:

Uta Grieshammer, PhD. is also returning to CIRM as the **Senior Science Officer for our Discovery program**. Uta was at CIRM from 2007 to 2015 and led the programs that created both our Genomics Initiative and our iPSC bank. She also organized several scientific conferences and workshops involving hundreds of CIRM-funded researchers.

After leaving CIRM she became the Scientific Director of the California Initiative to Advance Precision Medicine at the University of California San Francisco where she created and managed the application and peer review process. Most recently she was the Program Officer at the University of California Office of the President's (UCOP) Tobacco Related Disease Research Program where she focused on the neuroscience of nicotine addiction. She also helped develop a scholarship program to attract students from diverse backgrounds to pursue a career in science.

Michael Bunch joins CIRM as a Business Service Officer. Michael is a decorated veteran who has been working as the Chief Business Officer at the Veterans Home in Yountville, California. In that role he implemented new contract and reviewing processes and oversaw the income and insurance tracking for some 1,000 residents. With his extensive background in acquisition management, contingency contracting, and his deep knowledge of state regulations and guidelines Michael was able to increase funding, streamline processes and assist Veterans and their families to obtain the benefits and services that they qualified for.

Michael spent 25 years in the US Army including serving as part of the NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo. During that deployment he was awarded the Joint Service Commendation Medal (JSCM) for managing the fuel needs of 4 Multinational Task Forces and 33 Nations, an essential element in helping the mission succeed.

A Senior Drill Sergeant, Infantry Instructor and Financial and Resource Manager Michael has been awarded the Army Commendation Medal with 4 Oak Leaves, Army Achievement Medal with 4 Oak Leaves, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, KOSOVO Campaign Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, NATO Medal, Expert Infantryman Badge, Honorary Kentucky Colonel and Honorary Kentucky Admiral.

Nellie Almazan joins CIRM as a Grants Management Specialist. Nellie comes to us from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) where she has worked for 16 years, most recently as the Associate Transportation Planner with the Low Carbon Transit Operations program. Nellie managed more than 150 projects, reviewing grants to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the state and overseeing programs that had an emphasis on serving Disadvantaged Communities.

She is currently enrolled at Sacramento City College where her focus is on Sociology and Deaf Culture.

Alexandra Caraballo joins CIRM as a Grants Management Specialist. Alex has more than 15 years of grant administration experience with a focus on incorporating equity, diversity, and inclusion into grant making practices and decision-making. She comes to CIRM from the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan where she was the National Manager of Philanthropy. There she was responsible for the administration of approximately 200 grants in the national community health portfolio. Before Kaiser she was the Program Assistant and Associate Program Officer at the East Bay Community Foundation, where she partnered with donors and community-based organizations to advance racial equity and transform political, social and economic outcomes for East Bay Communities.

Alex currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Lindsay Wildlife Experience and was a former Advisory Board member for Oakland Head Start.

About CIRM

At CIRM, we never forget that we were created by the people of California to accelerate stem cell treatments to patients with unmet medical needs, and act with a sense of urgency to succeed in that mission.

To meet this challenge, our team of highly trained and experienced professionals actively partners with both academia and industry in a hands-on, entrepreneurial environment to fast track the development of today's most promising stem cell technologies.

With \$5.5 billion in funding and more than 150 active stem cell programs in our portfolio, CIRM is the world's largest institution dedicated to helping people by bringing the future of cellular medicine closer to reality.

For more information go to www.cirm.ca.gov

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